A WINDOW OPEN ON THE WORLD

The UNESCO Courier

OCTOBER
1959
(12th year)

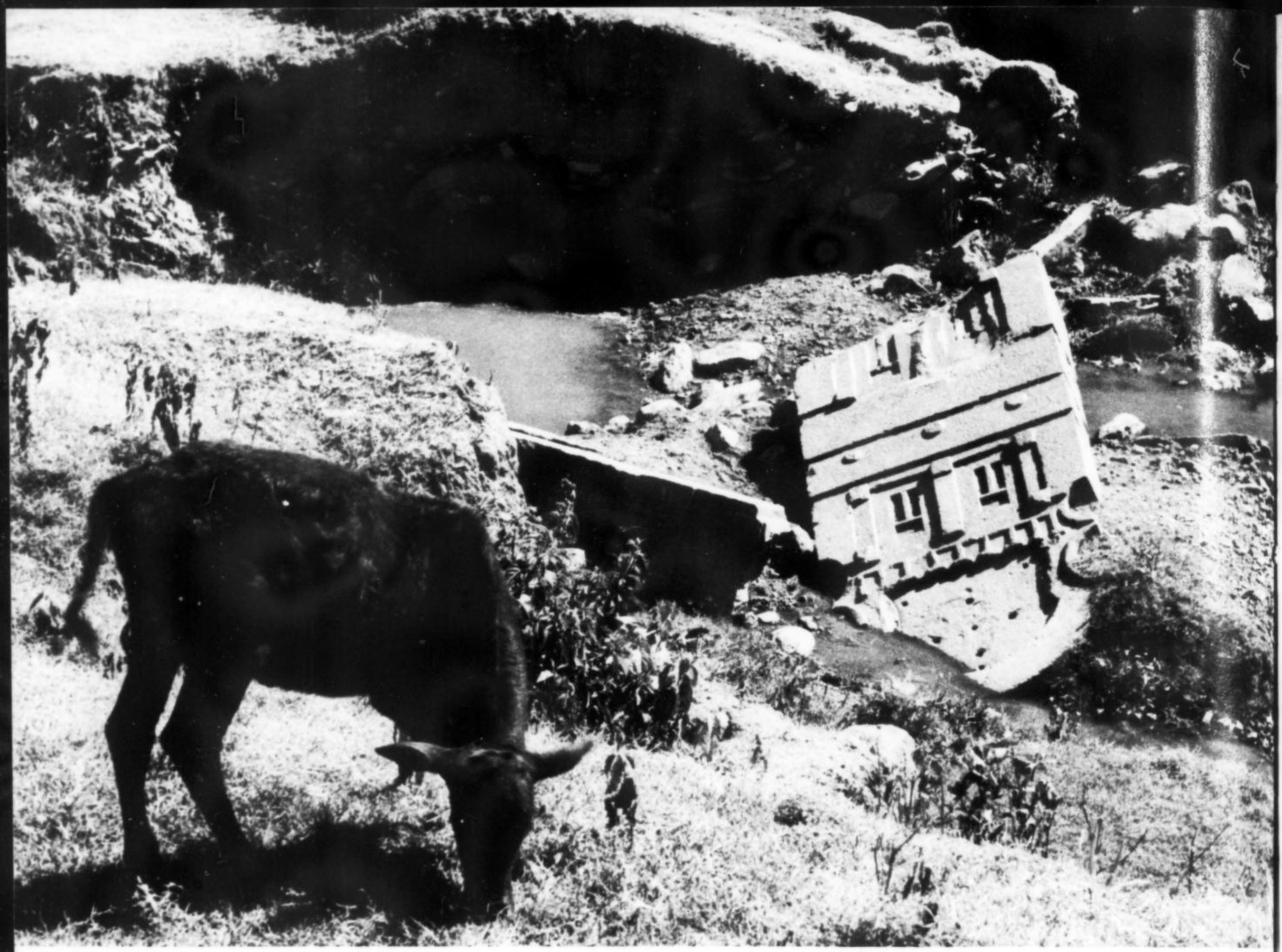
Price : 1/-stg. (U.K.)
30 cents (U. S.)
60 francs (France)

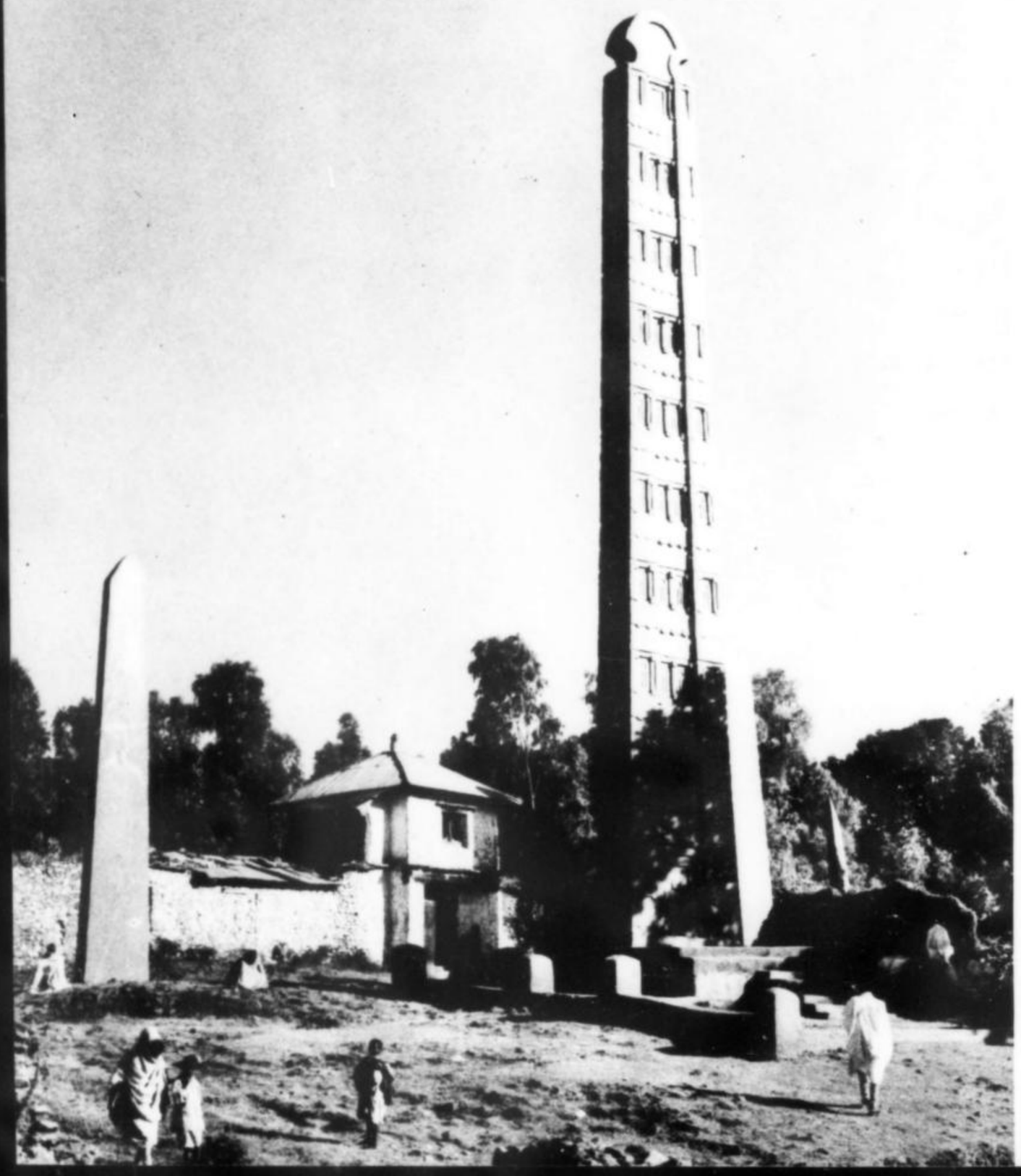
Shelve in stacks

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
OCT 29 1963
LIBRARY

AFRICA'S LOST PAST

The startling rediscovery of a continent





GIANT OBELISK OF ANCIENT ETHIOPIA

One of the most intriguing chapters in African history concerns the growth and survival of Ethiopia, a country converted to Christianity some 1,600 years ago, which conserved its religion and developed a highly advanced civilization independent of the Muslims to the north and east and of the Negro cultures to the south. Its foundations were laid when highly sophisticated and technically advanced peoples crossed over the Red Sea during the millennium before Christ and set up a powerful kingdom with its capital at Axum. The people of this Axumite Kingdom cut enormous blocks of hard stone and erected the giant monoliths and other kinds of standing stones still found in Ethiopia today. Some, like the giant "obelisk" (left), the tallest in Ethiopia, standing nearly 70 feet high and dominating the tombs of the kings in the ancient capital of Axum, have resisted the ravages of time. Others, their engraved lines and symbols a still unexplained mystery, have come crashing down to earth (photo above). The Axumite Kingdom and its Amharic successor acquired an identity and distinction which have helped to give the Ethiopia of today a unique culture and civilization. (See page 30)

Photos © Almasy, Paris